

The Handi-Van Concerns

1. Why are there no 3:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. Handi-Van pick-ups in Hawaii?  
(The 10/06/04 CAT Minutes addressed this as a nationwide problem.)

**RESPONSE:** There is service available at 3:00 p.m. as well as 4:00 p.m., depending on what part of the island the customer is coming from. However, during this peak period it is very busy.

2. Is OTS able to provide the following:

- a. New rider orientation.

**RESPONSE:** Currently, there is no proactive “new rider orientation” program.

- b. Create a “ridership” incentive program similar to the Las Vegas “Handi-Van” system.  
(Flyer distributed at the 10/06/04 meeting.)

**RESPONSE:** At this time, there is more demand than available space, not to mention the cost of developing and operating such a program.

- c. Create a “free” ride benefit. If the driver is late within their 30-minute window, e.g., free coupon mailed to rider.

**RESPONSE:** This would be difficult to implement for a number of reasons, e.g., staffing, variables beyond our control such as accidents, traffic, no-shows and/or late cancellations, etc.

3. Is the subcommittee able to request the “comment and complaint” log from OTS? City?

**RESPONSE:** DTS can supply the subcommittee with a statistical summary of complaints and commendations.

4. What is the difference between a “late cancellation” and a “no-show?” What are the consequences?

**RESPONSE:** A late cancellation is when a customer calls to cancel their ride less than two (2) hours before the scheduled pickup time.

A no-show occurs when the Operator shows up for the pickup, waits a minimum of five minutes, and the scheduled passenger is not present.

The consequences are one in the same, as both categories impact the service in a negative manner. The effort to reduce the no-shows and late cancellations has generated a reduction in the monthly totals.

5. Can OTS provide a "voicemail" for the 5 a.m. and 6 a.m. cancellations after 12-midnight?

**RESPONSE:** The telephones are personally answered from 4:00 a.m. until 1:00 a.m. the same service day. Good news! We now have a voice-messaging system answering the telephone between the hours of 1:00 a.m. and 4:00 a.m., so that customers can leave a message to cancel their early morning rides.

6. Why would a driver be suspended?

**RESPONSE:** This is based on objective Company standards, policies and procedures, and is normally conducted within the Collective Bargaining Agreement.

7. How often are the vans disinfected? For example, if a passenger has an "accident" on the van, it's cleaned up, but the odor lingers to the following day.

**RESPONSE:** Vehicles are disinfected 1-2 times a week. Detailed cleaning about once every other week. Accidents in vans are cleaned as soon as the vehicle is returned to the facility. Disinfectant is used for light spills, and a water and Clorox mixture is used for the heavier ones. It is difficult to let vehicles soiled to "air out" for a day for mixed smells to clear. Because we are not on shifts for 24 hours, it is not possible to let a vehicle air out during the day and close up everything at night. Other conditions like rain make it hard to leave a vehicle "aired out" and exposed.

8. How often are the fluid clean-up kits checked and refilled? Fire extinguishers checked?

**RESPONSE:** Fluid kits are refilled as soon as Vehicle Condition Reports (VCR) are picked up. Operators are instructed to check this item on their pre-trip reports. When anything from the kit is used, operators are responsible to write it down on the VCR. Maintenance replaces the used item. Further, Safety and Training staff assigns light-duty personnel to check and replace missing items, as necessary. Otherwise, items are replaced when the VCR card with items listed are received.

Fire extinguishers are checked at every vehicle inspection. Operators are responsible for checking the fire extinguisher as part of their pre-trip inspection. Any low extinguisher must be noted on the VCR and, if the Operator is going out on a trip, the extinguisher must be replaced prior to the start of the trip.

9. Are there specific routes drivers travel? For example, on one route within the hour, riders were picked up from Mililani, Whitmore Village, Wahiawa Town, and Mililani.

**RESPONSE:** The route traveled is based on customer demand and scheduling assignment to each available van. Routing is at the discretion of the Operator, and may vary from Operator to Operator depending on their knowledge and familiarity with their customers and the area in general. While Operators are trained in routing and instructed to take the most direct route with the least amount of backtracking, at times the schedule may dictate otherwise.

10. What are the procedures for drivers when passengers enter and exit the van?

- a. Do they check if the passenger has put on their seat belt and locked it?

**RESPONSE:** Operators are responsible for checking and advising customers about the seatbelt to ensure the safety of all on board but, ultimately, it is the customer who is responsible for determining if they want to use it or not.

- b. Are rules and regulations for the driver's public information?

**RESPONSE:** TheHandi-Van Rider's Guide provides the basic Operator requirements.

11. Is there a specific number of riders to be picked up in an hour? Is there a bonus for a full van?

**RESPONSE:** OTS Paratransit has set a goal of three (3) riders per hour, although this has yet to be achieved. The objective is to schedule as many seats available, time permitting, not to exceed the capacity constraints as outlined in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), i.e., not to exceed the 30-minute window, no later than time, and the 1 1/2 hour travel time comparable to TheBus in service delivery.

**There is no bonus given for a full van.**

12. "BONUS" – 10/06/04 minutes: Is there an incentive (bonus) program to schedule more than two passengers per hour? Do the drivers also get an incentive?

**RESPONSE:** Since the Scheduling unit makes the difference when efficiently assigning customer trips, in their Collective Bargaining Agreement there is a provision for an incentive to schedule proficiently in order to achieve a minimum of two (2) passengers per hour.

**Operators are not entitled to an incentive.**

13. Are OTS employees union members?

**RESPONSE:** Operators, Scheduling/Dispatch and Reservations, Maintenance, Customer Service and Finance are represented by the Teamsters Union.

14. Is TheHandi-Van on a 2-hour interval pick-up time schedule on the weekends?

**RESPONSE:** There is no specific interval time established, so customers may schedule at any hour. However, we do negotiate the time based on the level of demand, and taking into account the availability of vans assigned each day.

15. Stricter rules are needed to qualify and use a Handi-Van pass.

**RESPONSE:** The City's ADA eligibility process is self-certification with health care professional verification and in-person assessment as needed. This process has been approved by the Federal Transit Administration (in 1992) as meeting ADA requirements. The City has since changed the application 3 times and is evaluating the possibility of requiring applicants be interviewed in person, however, staffing and cost for such a change is currently not available.

16. It's raining and the rider does not have nor can carry an umbrella. Seeks shelter close to the scheduled pick-up site. Van does not slow down nor stop. Rider is considered a "no-show."

**RESPONSE:** Although the customer is responsible to be at the pickup site comparable to a bus rider, in all weather conditions, operators are instructed and trained to take extra measures during inclement weather for this special reason. On all scheduled pickups, operators are required to wait a minimum of five (5) minutes and every effort is made to contact the customer by telephone from Dispatch prior to departure.

COMMENT: From 10/06/04 Minutes

"State law...limits the City to purchase vehicles from a dealership within the state...currently only one vendor...and they can only bring in specific types of vans.

1. Is this a procurement problem?
2. Are van purchases a budgeted time limit item for the City?
3. Does the City/State receive Federal funds or grants that must be used within a certain time limit or the funds lapse?

**RESPONSE:**

1. There is a state law that requires vans be purchased through a motor vehicle dealer licensed in the state of Hawaii. Currently there is only one vendor authorized to do business with the State and City. Most other states do not have such a law. The City has submitted proposed revisions to the Hawaii Revised Statutes to the Legislature.
2. The City is responsible for budgeting and purchasing vans.
3. Capital funds in the City system have an 18-month life. For example, vans budgeted in the FY 06 budget must be purchased between July 1, 2005 and December 31, 2006.

With regards to the sample survey card submitted below, OTS recommends that the customer survey conducted by an independent professional agency might be of more benefit to all concerned parties.

SAMPLE

**SUGGESTION CARD**  
**(Postcard Size)**

How often do you ride TheHandi-Van? \_\_\_\_\_

How can we improve our service to you? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Mail or give card to driver.

**FRONT OF CARD**

Postcard Postage \$ .25

**OTS PARATRANSIT**  
**THEHANDI-VAN**  
**811 MIDDLE STREET**  
**HONOLULU, HI 96819**

(Note: Customer pays this or gives the card to the driver.)

**DTS RESPONSE:**

**Recommendation for developing a survey or suggestion comment card will be made to the contractor awarded “The Paratransit Service Study.”**